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A Bare Bones Reference List For Small and Medium-Sized Public Libraries in Maine, 3rd Edition, June 2011

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A Bare Bones Reference List For Small and Medium-Sized Public Libraries in Maine

Maine Regional Library System
3rd edition 2011

Introduction

In any public library, large or small, a reference collection helps answer questions and serves as the basis for further research. With the advent of the Internet, reference service has changed dramatically and large reference collections are no longer as necessary as they once were but a few good sources are still useful to have around. Not everyone has access to the Internet and sometimes it's just easier and faster to look something up in a book.

Reference books should be chosen using the same standards as other nonfiction: accuracy, authoritativeness, appropriateness to the collection and its users, format, lack of bias, point of view, and currency. In addition, reference books should be easy to use with a thorough index and cross-references to help users find information readily. Reference books usually do not circulate so before designating a book "reference," consider how important it is that the book be there when needed. If another reference source is just as effective and efficient for answering questions, perhaps the book in question should circulate.

The first edition of "A Bare Bones Reference Collection" was compiled in 1988 to offer librarians in small or medium-sized Maine libraries a starting point to assess their reference collections. We're considering as a small or medium-sized library one serving a community with a population under 7,500. The 1988 document was based on a list distributed by the Vermont Department of Libraries in 1987; material was evaluated according to its timeliness, effectiveness in responding to frequently asked questions, and reasonable cost. In this version, we've moved away from listing publication dates and prices in an effort to extend the life of the list.

The first two editions of this document were prepared by the Southern Maine Library District Reference Study Committee in cooperation with the Maine State Library and the Bangor Public Library. This latest edition was updated by Stephanie Zurinski, Central Maine Library District Consultant and Valerie Osborne, Northeastern Maine Library District Consultant.

Before selecting books from this list, we recommend analyzing your own community's needs. The size of your community and your library's resources will help determine how comprehensive your purchase plan should be. Use information from past reference questions and try to anticipate future needs. Several of the materials on this list are available in various editions or online. Where possible, links to the online resource are given. You may decide to purchase a hardcopy of the item for the library and to place a link on your website for your patrons doing research from home.

A BARE BONES REFERENCE LIST REFERENCE: SOURCES FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED LIBRARIES IN MAINE

Basic Tools

The majority of small public library reference questions can be answered with a few basic tools like almanacs, dictionaries and atlases. The titles given below are not meant to be an exhaustive list but are examples for consideration. Where possible, a link to the online version has also been given. These resources are very useful to have near your reference or circulation desk so they are quickly accessible when a patron has a question. Every library should have at least one copy of the current edition of these resources even if they are available online.

Almanacs

Almanacs contain statistics and facts on many subjects. They are updated annually. Keep the most current year in your reference section and move the last year into the circulating section. Weed any almanacs that are over 5 years old.

- *World Almanac and Book of Facts* (Infobase Learning)
- *Time Almanac* (The Time Inc. Magazine Company)
- *The Statistical Abstract of the United States* (no longer being published in print)

Dictionaries and Thesauri

Dictionaries contain information about words such as spelling, pronunciation, definitions, and derivation and some contain charts, pictures, and synonyms. Dictionaries are usually updated every five years.

- *Merriam-Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Merriam-Webster) - a good all-purpose dictionary for students and general readers
- *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) - up-to-date with good coverage of modern words and interpretations.
- *Random House Webster's Unabridged* (Random House) – available via MARVEL!
- *The New International Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* (Merriam-Webster).
- *Random House Webster's College Thesaurus* (Random House) – identifies synonyms.
- *Roget's International Thesaurus* (Collins Reference) is a good additional purchase.

Examples of Other Types of Dictionaries

- *Webster's French-English Dictionary* (Federal Street Press) –very useful in Maine
- *Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary* (F.A. Davis Company)

Atlases

Atlases contain as geographic information such as demographics, climate, vegetation, and roads.

- *Rand McNally Road Atlas*: US, Canada, Mexico (Rand McNally).
- *Atlas of the World* (Oxford)
- *Times Comprehensive Atlas of the World*

Encyclopedias

Encyclopedias are multi-volume sets containing articles on either a variety of subjects or just one subject. The articles are great for overviews of a subject area and often contain bibliographies that are useful for further exploration. Your reference collection should have a set that is no older than five years. Remember too, that Encyclopedia Britannica is available through MARVEL! If your library can only afford one set, choose one with a popular writing style and intermediate reading level such as:

- *World Book Encyclopedia*
- *Encyclopedia Britannica* (available through MARVEL!)

Online Resources

- MARVEL*!*- Thousands of full text magazines, newspapers, and reference books are available anywhere in the State of Maine through the online resources of MARVEL!, Maine's Virtual Library.
- LibrarySpot - a free virtual library resource center anyone exploring the Web for valuable research information.
- Internet Public Library - a public service organization merging the collections of resources from the Internet Public Library (IPL) and the Librarians' Internet Index (LII) websites. The site is hosted by Drexel University's College of Information Science & Technology.

Additional Resources

Several other materials will expand on the information found in the above tools. Select additional titles as your financial situation and community needs dictate. The following are not listed in order of importance:

1. *Consumer Reports Annual Buying Guide*-published annually in December, serves as an annual compilation of test reports, and is one of the most widely requested public library materials. One guide does not usually update another, so keep the last four years of Buying Guides.
2. *Merck Manual of Medical Information, Home Edition* -written for consumers http://www.merck.com/mmhe/index.html.
3. *101 Law Forms for Personal Use*-Ralph E. Warner and Robin Leonard (Nolo)
4. *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations: A Collection of Passages, Phrases, and Proverbs Traced to Their Sources in Ancient and Modern Literature* -If you have an earlier edition, keep it as well since later editions do not include everything from previous editions.
5. *Benet's Reader's Encyclopedia* (Harper & Row,)-assists with literary questions.
6. *Black's Law Dictionary*
7. *Chase's Annual Events* -Founded in 1957, this annual compilation contains more than 12,000 special events, holidays, historic anniversaries, etc.
8. *Complete Guide to Prescription and Non-Prescription Drugs* -H. Winter Griffith and Stephen Moore (Perigee) Use www.medlineplus.gov for current information on prescription drugs.
9. *Emily Post's Etiquette* **(**Harper & Row).
10. *Foundation Grants to Individuals* -Phyllis Edelson, ed. (New York: Foundation Center
11. *Guinness Book of World Records* (Bantam)-This gives superlatives for fun and quick reference. Older editions will circulate, especially to kids. www.guinnessworldrecords.com/default.aspx
12. *Hoyle's Rules of Games*
13. *Kovel's Antiques and Collectibles Price List* (Crown)
14. *Legal Guide for Starting and Running a Small Business* -Fred S. Steingold (Nolo)
15. *Merriam-Webster Geographical Dictionary*
16. Name Dictionaries-Presents names, their variants and their diminutives, with origin, analysis and history
    - *Dictionary of First Names* -Patrick Hanks (Putnam).
    - *Chambers Dictionary of First Names: An Indispensable Guide to More Than 10,000 Names* - Julia Cresswell
17. *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (GPO)- This U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics handbook discusses employment trends and outlook, including nature of work, qualifications, and earning and working conditions for more than 800 occupations. http://www.bls.gov/oco/
18. *Peterson's Four Year Colleges* -Peterson's regional college guides are nearly all available in paperback in a price range of $5.00-$30.00. www.petersons.com

19. *United States Government Manual* (Office of the Federal Register, Superintendent of Documents, National Archive and Records Administration,) www.gpoaccess.gov/gmanual/index.html
20. Writer's Tools:
    - *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*- Kate L. Turabian (Univ. of Chicago Press)
    - *Writer's Reference*- Diana Hacker
    - *Pocket Style Manual* -Diana Hacker
    - *Writer's Market* (F&W Publishers) –published annually

Focus On Maine

These Maine and local resources include both *types* of material as well as *specific titles* that are basic sources for the reference collection.

- Community Checklist Your library should include the following
  Local histories
  Local newspapers
  Annual town reports
  Directory of town/regional officials and services
  Chamber of Commerce publications
  Local government and community publications, studies and reports;
  Local business annual reports
  Local maps
  Local telephone books
- *Dictionary of Maine Place-Names*- Philip R. Rutherford (The Bond Wheelwright Company). A handy source which lists brief statements about the origins of towns, rivers, ponds, islands and hills. Out-of-print, available on Amazon (used and new).
- *Directory of Maine Grantmakers* (Maine Philanthropy Center)-Profiles of more than 400 grant makers, Maine corporate foundations, corporate giving programs, and grant makers located outside Maine with granting history in Maine.
- *Length and Breadth of Maine* -Stanley B. Atwood (University of Maine Press). Wealth of information about Maine towns, lakes, rivers, flora, fauna and much more. Out-of-print, available on Amazon (used and new).
- *Maine Attorney General's Consumer Law Guide*- (State of Maine, Office of the Attorney General) http://www.maine.gov/ag/consumer/consumer_law_guide.shtml
- *Maine Bicentennial Atlas* -Gerald E. Morris, ed. (Portland: Maine Historical Society). Historical atlas.
- *Maine Family Law Pamphlet*: *As Amended Through the 123rd Legislature*, 2007 First Regular Session (Thomson West)
- *Maine Senate and House Register* (Maine House and Senate, current year, free from your legislator). State Constitution, rules, directory, and memoranda. http://www.maine.gov/portal/government/legislature.html
- State Maps -available from the Maine Office of Tourism. See also www.maine.gov, a valuable tool for planning trips, events and attractions, state government facts, etc.
- *Citizen's Guide to the Maine Legislature* (Maine People's Resource Center)
- *The Maine Atlas and Gazetteer* (DeLorme Publishing Company).
  An excellent collection of maps covering the entire state of Maine in 70 detailed sections. Included are street maps for selected cities within the state. The gazetteer section has information about airports, campgrounds, museums, beaches, etc.
- *Maine Register, State Yearbook and Legislative Manual*
  (Tower Publishing, annual). Includes information on Maine: Congressional delegation, courts, foreign consulates, federal agencies, state government, clubs, associations, societies,

organizations, media, schools (elementary through college), zip codes, geographical directory and a classified business directory.

Webliography

The following free web resources include citations from "Best Free Reference Websites," RUSA Quarterly. Every effort has been made to confirm accuracy at time of publication.

Business, Finance & Employment

- Federal forms including small business forms http://www.forms.gov/bgfPortal/citizen.portal
- IRS Forms for tax time http://www.irs.gov
- Job Bank from the Maine Dept. of Labor http://198.182.162.220/default.asp
- Job listings and employers for Maine www.jobsinmaine.com
- Maine Small Business Development Center www.mainesbdc.org/
- Money management resources www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/news/cnwin0607/index.html
- Small Business Administration www.sba.gov
- Stock quotes (current and historical) http://bigcharts.marketwatch.com/

Consumer Information

- 800 tel. numbers for live business and service customer service reps www.gethuman.com
- Consumer guides and protections http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Consumer_Safety.shtml
- Consumer Price Index http://www.bls.gov/cpi/home.htm
- Consumer top-rated products in 13 categories www.consumersearch.com
- How products are made www.madehow.com
- How to do just about anything www.ehow.com
- Kelley Blue Book (Vehicle pricing/appraisal) http://www.kbb.com/
- Edmunds (Vehicle pricing/appraisal/reviews) http://www.edmunds.com/
- Product recalls www.recalls.gov

Education

- College information (also links to book sales) www.petersons.com
- Country information
  Background Notes (U.S. State Dept. information about countries)
  http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/.
  CIA World Fact Book
  https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html
- Dictionary of units of measurement and conversions http://www.unc.edu/~rowlett/units/
- Graphing calculator http://www.coolmath.com/graphit/index.html
- Guide to grammar and writing http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/
- Help citing research in several styles http://citationmachine.net
- Math help and tutorials http://www.sosmath.com/
- Mathematic calculations http://www.martindalecenter.com/Calculators2.html
- Newspapers by state and country http://www.ipl.org/div/news/
- Presidents of the US www.ipl.org/div/potus
- Strunk & White's Elements of Style http://www.bartleby.com/141/

Entertainment

- Celebrities (living & deceased) from all fields www.wa-wd.com
- Great books online http://www.bartleby.com/
- Movie Database www.imdb.com
- Musical styles from popular to obscure with reviews, out of print, etc. www.allmusic.com
- Readers' advisory and library catalog http://www.librarything.com/

Genealogy

See the following three sites for comprehensive genealogy research:

http://www.familysearch.org (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints)
http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/
http://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/index.html

- Adoption information for genealogists http://adoptionregistry.com
- Genealogy sites on the internet http://www.cyndislist.com/
- Port of New York Passenger records search http://www.ellisisland.org/
- Social Security Death Index (1962+) http://ssdi.genealogy.rootsweb.com/

General Reference

- 600,000+ images from the New York Public Library http://digitalgallery.nypl.org
- Art online http://www.artcyclopedia.com/
- Currency converter http://www.xe.com/ucc/
- Library of Congress www.loc.gov
- Library of Congress American Memory Project - virtual library & museum
  http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html
- Maine Memory Network - virtual library & museum http://www.mainememory.net/
- MapQuest http://www.mapquest.com/
- Maps -- political, physical, weather, natural resources www.nationalatlas.gov
- National Weather Service www.nws.noaa.gov
- Telephone directories
  www.yellowpages.com
  www.switchboard.com
  www.anywho.com (reverse look-up)
- Translations (not always perfectly) http://babelfish.altavista.com
- Yellow Pages, White Pages, maps and directions http://www.anywho.com/
- Zip Code look-up http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp

Health & Nutrition

- Diet, weight loss, physical fitness www.smallstep.gov
- Evaluating health information on the Internet
  http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/evaluatinghealthinformation.html
- Food diary, calorie counter, health and fitness forums http://www.thedailyplate.com/
- Maine Board of Licensure in Medicine (Includes Docfinder, a Maine directory of physicians and physician assistants) http://www.docboard.org/me/me_home.htm
- Mayo Clinic www.mayoclinic.com
- National Institute of Mental Health www.nimh.nih.gov
- National Library of Medicine http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/
- Nutrition information www.nutrition.gov
- Patient resources and physician locator http://www.mainemed.com/patients/index.php
- Recipes

http://allrecipes.com
www.epicurious.com

Law & Government

- Internet Legal Research Group (legal forms, research, lawyers, etc.) http://www.ilrg.com
- Kid's portal to the US Government http://www.kids.gov/
- Legal help: HelpME Law http://www.helpmelaw.org/
- Maine Law and Legal resources list http://www.maine.gov/portal/government/law.html
- Maine Statutes http://janus.state.me.us/legis/statutes
- US Government's official web portal http://www.usa.gov/

Search Engines

To compare Search Engines:
http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/SearchEngines.html

Technology

- BareBones 101: A basic tutorial on searching the web
  http://www.sc.edu/beaufort/library/pages/bones/bones.shtml
- Computer mouse and keyboard tutorial by the City of Mesa (Arizona) Library
  http://www.mesalibrary.org/research/mouse/page01.htm
- Computer mouse tutorial
  http://www.pbclibrary.org/mousing/mousercise.htm
- Computer tutorials based on pictures http://inpics.net
- Email verification http://verify-email.org/
- Email from any computer (Mail2web) http://mail2web.com/
- Learn the Net in English (also French and Spanish)
  http://www.learnthenet.com/english/index.html
- Open source office products: http://www.openoffice.org/
- Reviews of tech products and services http://reviews.cnet.com/?tag=hd_ts
- Tips, tricks and tech help http://help.cnet.com/?tag=hd_ts
- Training for Microsoft Office products online
  http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/training/default.aspx
- Tutorials for Microsoft programs http://mistupid.com/tutorials/
- Typing course http://www.typing-lessons.org/
- WebJunction Maine http://me.webjunction.org/do/Home Global online community for library staff to share ideas, access resources, and enroll in online courses.